

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to correct a typographical error in formula I. Support for this amendment is found at, for example, page 2, lines 10-14, of the specification. Applicants respectfully submit that this amendment does not narrow claim 1. Claims 1-14 are pending and at issue.

Claims 1-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Bogeso (U.S. Patent No. 4,136,193).

Bogeso does not disclose the preparation of citalopram by a cyanide exchange reaction followed by a film distillation process as recited in the pending claims. Example 2 of Bogeso does not disclose purifying citalopram by a film distillation process. Furthermore, as admitted by the Examiner on page 2 of the July 14, 2003 Office Action, Example 3 of Bogeso does not prepare citalopram by a cyanide exchange reaction of a compound of formula 2 as recited in claim 1 of the pending application. See the penultimate paragraph on page 2 of the Office Action (“Although [Bogeso] doesn’t distill this citalopram it vacuum distills citalopram made by a synthesis where the 5-cyano group is made by the same type of cyanation of the 5-halo precursor which lacks the 1-3 (dimethylamino) propyl group”). Therefore, Bogeso does not anticipate claims 1-14. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 1-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Bogeso.

As discussed at page 1, lines 30-35, of the specification, citalopram prepared by certain cyanide exchange reactions have high molecular weight impurities including dimeric

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reaction products in unacceptable amounts. These impurities are difficult to remove by usual working up procedures. The inventors found that these high molecular weight impurities could be removed by a film distillation process.

One of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated by Bogeso to purify a citalopram product prepared by a cyanide exchange reaction, by a film distillation process as recited in the pending claims. Bogeso does not disclose or suggest that high molecular weight impurities including dimeric reaction products are formed during the cyanation reaction. Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to remove such impurities or to purify the citalopram product by a film distillation process rather than one of the other numerous known purification techniques.

The Examiner contends that one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to vacuum distill the citalopram prepared in Example 2 of the reference by the distillation method disclosed in Example 3.

Bogeso does not disclose or suggest a film distillation process as required by the pending claims, nor the advantages of such a process over conventional batch wise vacuum distillation. Film distillation processes, such as thin film and short path distillation processes, have very short resident times for the starting material since it is fed to a hot surface where the evaporation takes place. In contrast, in conventional batch wise vacuum distillation, the entire starting material remains on a hot surface until the required temperature of evaporation, resulting in a substantially longer resident time. During that time, possible thermal decomposition of the

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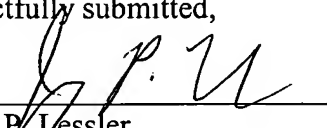
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If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

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Respectfully submitted,

By


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